

## My Mother's Voice.

My mother's voice! how oft I hear  
In silence on my lonely floor  
Like healing sent on wings of sleep  
Or dew on the unconscious flower.  
I might forget her melting prayer  
While pleasure's pulses madly fly  
But in the still, unbroken air  
Her gentle tones come stealing by—  
And years of sin and manhood flee,  
And leave me at my mother's knee.

## Washington Allston.

In Arvine's Cyclopaedia of Anecdotes, recently published, the following are related respecting this distinguished American artist:

The strong devotional feelings of this late distinguished artist formed one of the most prominent traits of his beautiful character. Connected with this characteristic is a remarkable incident in his early life, which has been related to us by one of his few intimate friends. Mr. Allston was a member of the Episcopal Church. Although in early life he was ever a constant attendant, he was not strongly attached to religion, nor eminent for his piety. It would be too much to say that he was an unbeliever, or even a skeptic, in his views, but he was wont to speak slightly of religious things, and even to enjoy jests at the expense of holy subjects. His feelings, however, underwent a remarkable change, in consequence of a singular event in his life, which made a very strong impression, and was even regarded by him as a direct divine interposition in his behalf.

Not long after his marriage with his first wife, the sister of the late Dr. Channing, he made his second visit to Europe. After residence there of a little more than a year, his pecuniary wants became very pressing and urgent—more so than at any other period of his life. He was even at times at a loss for the means of purchasing the necessities of life.

On one of these occasions, as he himself used to narrate the event, he was in his studio reflecting, almost with a feeling of desperation, upon his condition. His conscience seemed to tell him that he had deserved his afflictions, and drawn them upon himself by his neglect of religion, and his want of due gratitude for past favors from Heaven. His heart, at last, seemed filled with the hope that God would listen to his prayers, if he would offer up his direct expressions of penitence, and ask for divine aid. He accordingly locked his door, withdrew to a corner of the room, threw himself upon his knees, and prayed for a loaf of bread for himself and his wife.

While thus employed, a knock was heard at the door. A feeling of momentary shame at being detected in this position, and of fear lest he might have been observed, induced him to hasten and open the door. A stranger inquired for Mr. Allston. He was anxious to learn who was the fortunate purchaser of the painting of the Angel Uriel, regarded by the artist as one of his masterpieces, and which had won the prize at the exhibition of the Academy. He was told that it had not been sold. "Can it be possible? Not sold! Where is it to be had?"

"In this very room. Here it is!" producing the painting from a corner, and wiping off the dust. "Is it for sale? Can it be bought?" was the eager interrogatory.

"It is for sale; but its value has never yet, to my idea of its worth, been adequately appreciated, and I would not part with it."

"What is its price?"

"I have done affixing any nominal sum. I have always, so far, exceeded my offers. I leave it for you to name the price."

"Will four hundred pounds be an adequate recompense?"

"It is more than I have ever asked for!"

"Then the painting is mine."

The stranger introduced himself as the Marquis of Stafford, and he became, from that moment, one of the warmest friends of Mr. Allston. By him, Mr. Allston was introduced to the society of the nobility and gentry, and he became one of the most favored among the many gifted minds that adorned the circle to which he was thus introduced, but in which he was never fond of appearing often.

The instantaneous relief, thus afforded by the liberality of this noble visitor, was always regarded by Allston as a direct answer to his prayer, and it made a deep impression upon his mind. To this event he was ever after wont to attribute the increase of devotional feelings, which became a prominent trait in his character.

ALLSTON'S GREAT PICTURE.

Allston's great picture has been the subject of no little misunderstanding. It was unfortunate that such vague and almost boundless expectations in regard to it should have been excited in the public mind. His injudicious friends whispered about that he was engaged upon a stupendous work, and it was not long before a mysterious interest became attached to the rumor.

Years passed, and the picture did not make its appearance. Meantime, a few individuals had been favored with a glimpse of the design. The subject was known to be Belshazzar's Feast. Delay only quickened curiosity and inflamed expectation. At length it was said that the canvass was rolled up, and the great work abandoned.

Two reasons have been assigned for this—one, that an execution has been levied upon the work, in consequence of which the artist had resigned it in disgust; the other, that the great idea in the picture—that of making the light all radiate from the hand-writing on the wall—had been anticipated by Martin.

In 1831, Allston says, in a letter to McMurtrie: "I have but a few weeks since been established in my new painting-room, which I have built in this place, (Cambridgeport). Belshazzar has been rolled up and reposing in a packing case for more than three years, in consequence of my former large room in Boston passing into the hands of a new owner, who has converted it into a lively stable."

Belshazzar will still remain some time in his case; some embarrassing debts, and my immediate necessities, being the cause. I must be free in mind before I can finish. I trust, however, that the time will not be very long."

In another letter, he thus speaks of it: "I could long ago have finished this, or other pictures as large, had my mind been free; for, indeed, I have already bestowed upon it as much mental and manual labor as, under another state of mind, would have completed several such pictures. But to go into the subject of all the obstacles and hindrances upon my spirit would hardly be consistent with delicacy and self-respect. Nor could I be far enough understood, if I should do it, to answer by it any essential purpose. Those feelings which are most intimately blended with one's nature, and which most powerfully and continuously influence us, are the very feelings most difficult to give any distinct apprehension of to another."

It is well known that not until a few months before his death did Allston resume the work. He then erased several figures, altered his plan, and in the midst of these changes forever ceased from his labors. It remains a great fragment. His power and style are, however, clearly evident. To the artist it will ever be an object of veneration, for it bears the last touches of the great pencil. It has secured to Allston an immortality which would have satisfied even Napoleon himself. Allston was installed one of the first stars in the bright constellation of American geniuses.

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